

Speech: Approbation of the Lord Mayor Elect ceremony

My Lord Mayor Elect, I am commanded by Her Majesty The Queen to convey Her Majesty's express approval of the choice of the citizens of London in electing you to be Lord Mayor for the coming year.

I am delighted to welcome you, your family and other distinguished guests to formally convey this message.

May I also welcome you, Mr Recorder, and pay tribute to the huge contribution you have made – and continue to make – to our justice system.

My Lord Mayor Elect, you will be the 691st Lord Mayor, coming with an extensive background in finance and banking and having been Alderman for the City of London ward of Coleman Street since 2013.

It is a ward that, by virtue of Finsbury Circus, not only provides an oasis of calm right in the heart of the City, but historically, has also proved a refuge for Members of Parliament in times of political and constitutional crisis.

Most famously, for five MPs in 1642, Coleman Street served as a sanctuary from Charles I who tried to have them arrested. My Lord Mayor Elect, it's good to know where to head if things get really bad over the next months ahead!

I'd also like to take this opportunity to recognise the outgoing Lord Mayor. Charles, your focus on rebuilding trust has been timely in its need and already tangible in its effect.

Your launch of the 'Business of Trust' programme is an important step, not only in rebuilding trust that has been eroded from past events, but in building new guiding principles that will sustain people's trust in institutions and businesses for our digital and technologically-driven future.

My Lord Mayor Elect, your priority for the year ahead also looks to the future. You have said your focus will be 'Shaping tomorrow's City today'. In so doing, you will promote and champion digital skills, innovation and technology, with a particular focus on young people.

I welcome that important agenda. Ensuring we have a skilled workforce fit for the future is essential not just for the competitiveness of the City, and for the whole of the UK, but in ensuring people are equipped to seize the new opportunities that will be before them.

We both share a passion for the importance of education as a foundation in life and in the belief that every young person, no matter what their circumstances, should be able to develop their potential and have the same

opportunities.

You have never forgotten how instrumental the education you received at King Edward's, Witley was in shaping your future. With the school's origins in educating the poor and under-privileged, and its links with the City of London, it clearly also served – and continues to serve – as an inspiration.

In your role as a school governor there and through your support of education charities and initiatives – such as Barclays Life Skills – you have sought to help young people get that good start in life and develop the skills they need to seize opportunities and fulfil their ambitions.

And the fact is, today, many of those opportunities for young people lie in – or will come out of – the technology revolution. It's a revolution that is transforming every aspect of our personal lives, civil society, our courts and justice system, government, workplaces and the wider economy.

Mr Recorder, as you alluded to, we have a choice. We can either let this revolution sweep over us, or we can prepare for what's on the horizon and equip ourselves with the means to harness its power.

It's an important area of work for the Ministry of Justice in terms of looking at and anticipating the kind of justice system we need for the future and the skills we need from those working in it.

I welcome the focus you will bring to preparing the City for the future during your term in office. And in particular, making sure that we are giving today's young people the skills and support they need to succeed in the world of tomorrow, to ensure that nobody is left behind and that we are all masters of, and not slaves to, this exciting revolution.

My Lord Mayor Elect, as we have heard, you and your family are keen skiers. I want to end with what Olympic skier Lindsey Vonn said when she was asked the other week why she was retiring at the age of 33. She said:

I really would like to be active when I'm older...

...so I have to look to the future and not just be so focused on what's in front of me.

As well as being very telling about the toll skiing can take, it speaks to the foresight that you will bring to your Mayoralty – of shaping tomorrow's City today. You might say, it's about looking ahead to the next summit as well as to the next slalom.

The roots of the City of London run deep with its enduring traditions and institutions. But, as with the City's skyline, it also constantly looks to the future – evolving, innovating and renewing – attracting new ideas and fresh blood to flow through its ancient arteries. That is what keeps the City's heart beating strongly.

My Lord Mayor Elect, I know through your passion for supporting opportunity and focus on nurturing the skills and talent we need for the future, that heart will beat with ever-more relevance and resonance as you shape the City for the world of tomorrow.